

Viet statue for memorial was therapy for sculptor

By Laurie Williams Sowby 11 Oct 1989
Deseret News correspondent

Clyde Ross Morgan has been feeling relief along with apprehension this week as finishing touches are made to an 8-foot-tall bronze statue that started out as a personal therapy project.

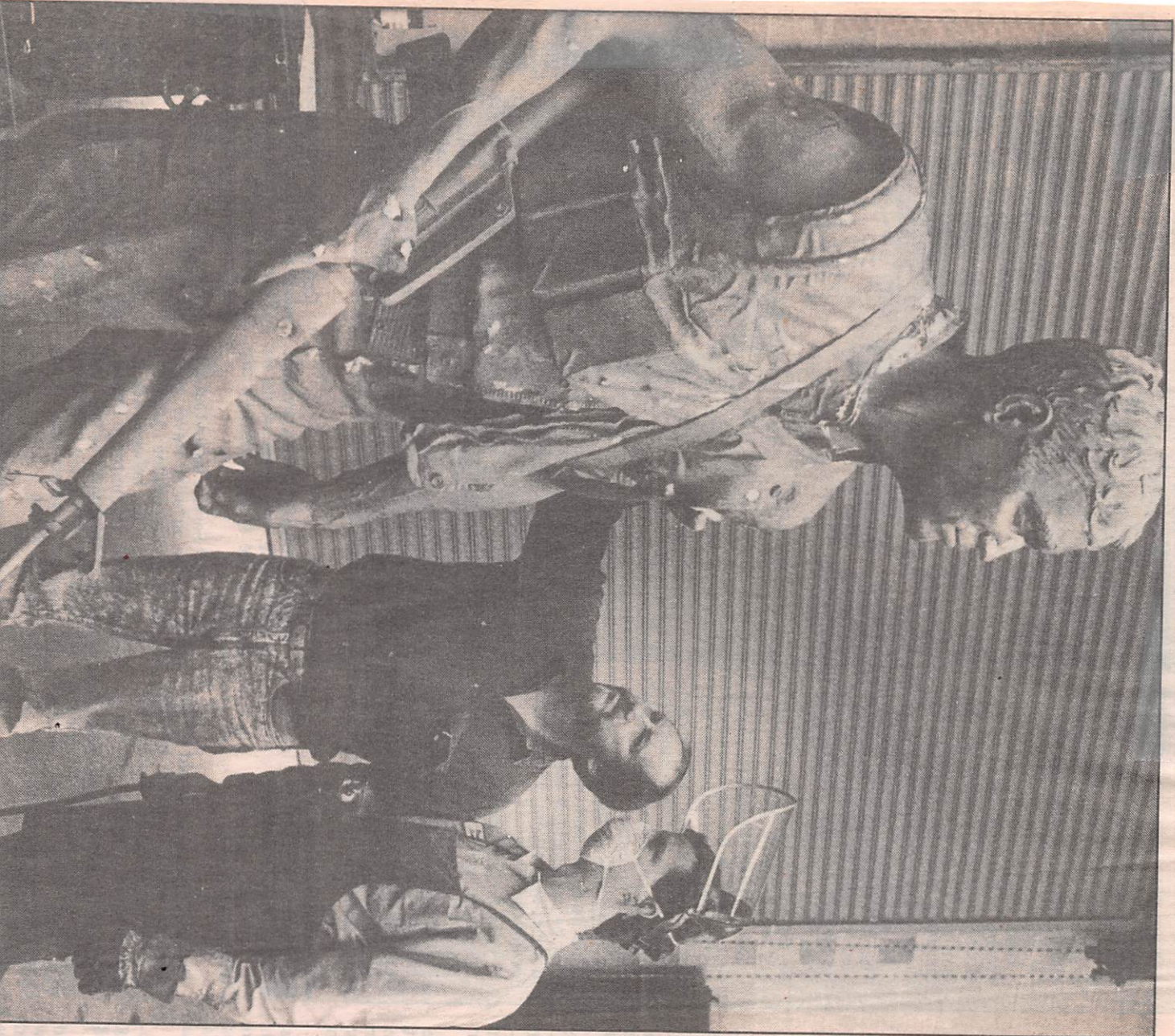
Saturday the 47-year-old artist will witness the unveiling of his heroic-size statue, "But Not Forgotten," as the state's memorial to Vietnam veterans is dedicated west of the State Capitol. Ceremonies begin at 2 p.m.

Although Morgan's sculptures usually depict historical events and figures, the clay model of the lone soldier trudging through a rice paddy was not originally intended for public display. Morgan served in Vietnam in 1966, and nearly 20 years later he was still troubled by the experience. The original model of "But Not Forgotten" was an assignment from a counselor.

Morgan, who worked in plastic products development and design until he decided at 40 to do what he'd always wanted to do, had seen other Vietnam depictions. And he was angry. "I never thought it should be fantasized, romanticized, or Rambo-ized," he said.

When Morgan — a St. George native who grew up at the mouth of Emigration Canyon and now lives in Sedona, Ariz. — decided to sculpt the statue, he contacted a fellow Vietnam vet to be the model. O'Conner Dale, a river guide living in Kanab, served in Vietnam in '68. The rifle shouldered by the soldier in Morgan's statue is the same as the one Dale used.

When they saw the finished model, friends who'd read about the Utah competition for a Vietnam memorial urged





Morgan to enter the piece at the Springville Museum of Art. It was early 1985. Judging had already been going on for two weeks. And before Morgan could get his sculpture to Utah, his father and 17-year-old son both died.

With the works of 16 other sculptors already in the running, the odds were against him. But Morgan's entry was the only one that had a figure in it.

Please see VET on B2

Clyde Ross Morgan, left, with Nate Johnsen oversees work on Vietnam memorial sculpture.

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